

Foster Parents

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

May 2006



Your mission statement
is tattooed on your heart.

– Anonymous

For all of you whose hearts are tattooed with the mission statement of caring for children, we say thank you.

New Requirements for Caregivers, Licensed and Unlicensed, and Social Workers When a Child or Youth is Missing From Care

As you know, children and youth who are missing from care or who are absent from care without authorization often find themselves in high-risk situations. To better respond to this issue, effective May 1, 2006 there will be new requirements for how caregivers report and respond to children and youth who are missing from care. These changes also clarify how social workers will be required to respond. For more information see the attached letter and log on to the foster parent website at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>. You can also contact your foster home licenser if you have questions about these changes.

In Honor of All You Do!

May is National Foster Care Month. This is the month set aside to honor the great work done all year long by foster parents and others who care for, and about, children. This year, Foster Care Month will coincide with the 40th anniversary of Casey Family Programs, a nationally recognized child welfare organization that got its start here in Washington State as an outgrowth of United Parcel Service (UPS). Many events are planned for May. To find out about events in your area, contact your local DCFS office or for a schedule of some of the events go to the foster parent website at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>. For information about the National Foster Care Month campaign you can go to their website at <http://www.fostercaremonth.org/Home/>.

Go for a Swim or Take a Ride up the Space Needle for Free

As a thank you to foster families Casey Family Programs and the YMCA Why Foster? program have arranged for special passes for foster families. Casey Family Programs, in partnership with the Space Needle, is providing vouchers for foster families to ride the elevator to the top of the Space Needle and the Why Foster? program has agreement from YMCA facilities statewide with swimming pools for foster families to swim for free during swim nights. Both the swim passes and Space Needle vouchers are for foster families to use during the month of May. Watch your mail for a special letter with passes/vouchers enclosed. If you need more information about these events, contact Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or boba300@dshs.wa.gov.

A big thank you to Casey Family Programs and the YMCA for their continuing support of foster parents, foster youth and foster care!

Spokane and Seattle Honor Foster Parents!

Two regional events have already taken place in April to recognize foster parents and all they do. The first event was held in Spokane and the second in Seattle.

Spokane foster parents were honored at a recognition and appreciation dinner held on April 22. They enjoyed good food, company and entertainment.

The second event, held April 26th, honored foster parents for an evening of dinner and entertainment to thank them for the work they do in the community and in particular for the children. Onsite child care was provided for after dinner so caregivers could sit back, relax and enjoy the show! Entertainment was provided by The Shumba Youth Marimba Ensemble.

Plant A Dream, Grow A Child: The 2006 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference

The 2006 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference is scheduled for September 17, 18 and 19 in Spokane. The Call for Presenters has gone out and workshop proposals are coming in. The Committee is hard at work identifying speakers who will bring valuable information to you as caregivers. If you would like to propose a workshop and need a proposal form, please call or email Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or boba300@dshs.wa.gov.

Confidentiality of Foster Parent Information

Children's Administration does not release your name or address to the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPWS), local foster parent associations, YMCA of Greater Seattle or to Families for Kids (FFK). These agencies can provide support, information and referral, and key information to assist you in providing for the children in your care. We encourage you to contact each of these agencies and provide them with your information so that they can add you to their email and mailing list and you can then receive important information. Contact information for these agencies is:

Foster Parent Association of Washington State: www.fpaws.org or 1-800-391-CARE (2273)

Families for Kids (FFK): www.familiesforkids.org or 1-888-794

YMCA of Greater Seattle: whyfoster@seattleymca.org or 1-800-760-5340

Foster Care Resource Network (Bremerton and Tacoma caregivers): 1-253-677-8122.

Important Numbers

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in foster care or are thinking about doing so:

Statewide information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent: *Why Foster* statewide telephone line at 1-800-760-5340 or whyfoster@seattleymca.org Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Statewide information about receiving foster parent support: *Families for Kids*: 1-888-794-1784 or www.familiesforkids.org Monday- Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message. Receive a return call by the next business day.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: *Foster Care Resource Network*, 1-253-677-8122. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: *Foster Parent Association of Washington State*, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: *Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team* (FIRST) 1-253-219-6782, Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

CA Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis Line and general support on licensing and case management questions not abuse or neglect: *Caregiver Support/Crisis Line*: 1-800-301-1868. Weeknights from 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m./weekends and holidays, 24 hours per day.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website and Foster Parent Training Website

For information about Foster Parenting: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For information about Foster Parent Training: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve:(r) <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>